

~~SENSITIVE~~

CIA/SAVA /WVIND 710306



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 6 March 1971

NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

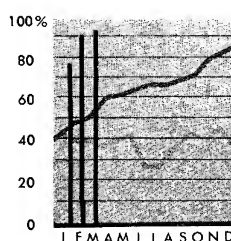
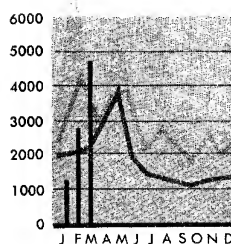
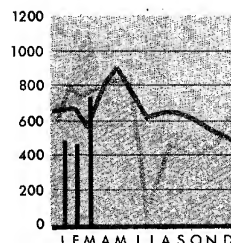
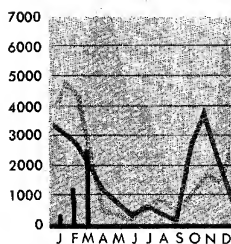
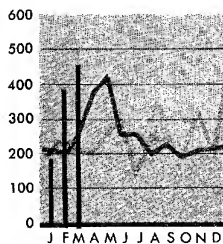
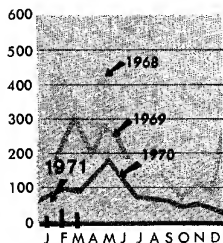
For the President Only

~~Top Secret~~

SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

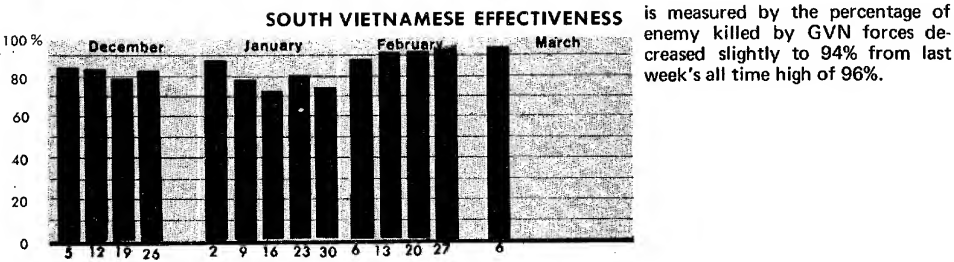
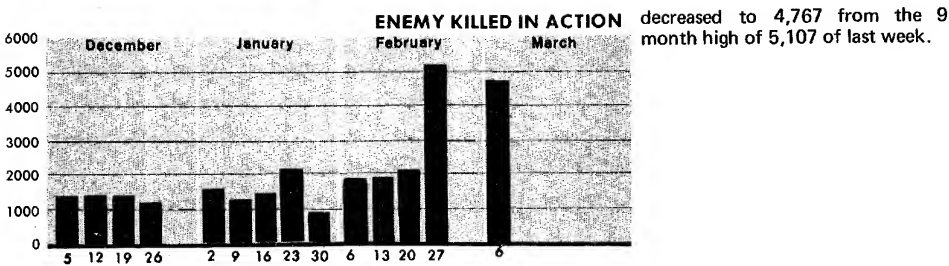
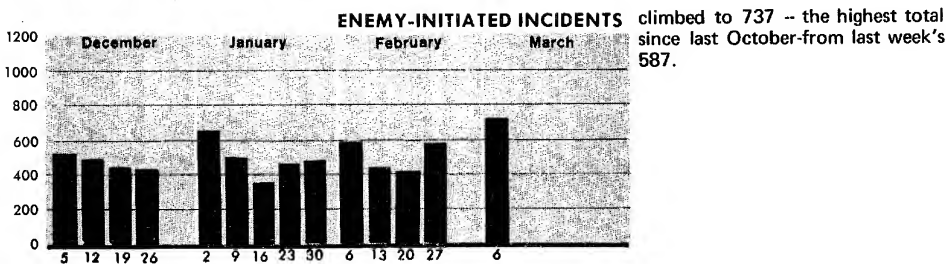
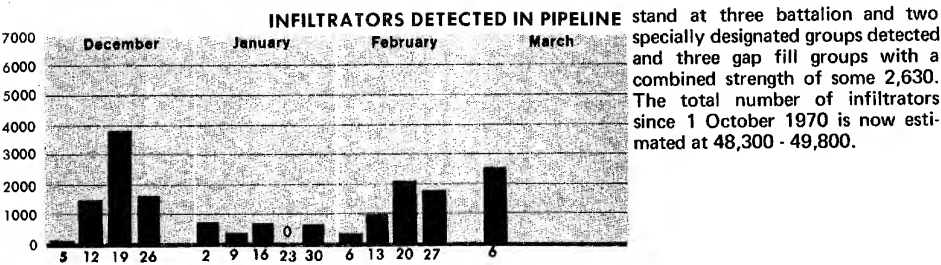
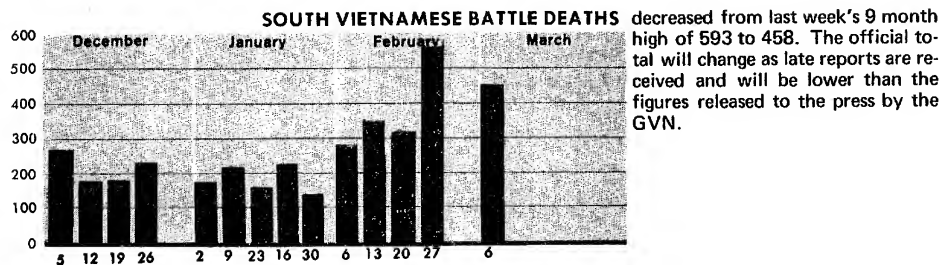
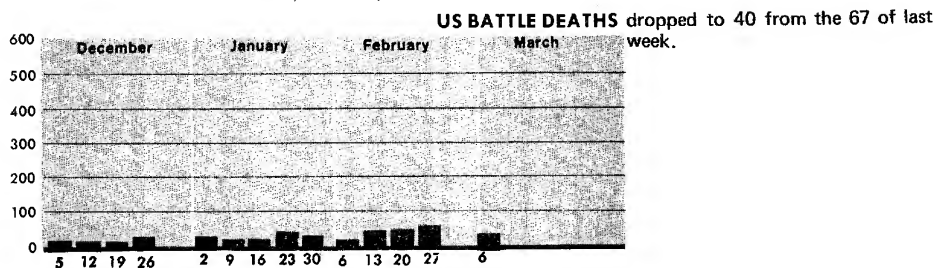
1968-1971

Weekly average for each month



DECEMBER 1970 - MARCH 1971

Weekly data as reported



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

LAM SON 719 continued to be the main arena of enemy activity during the week. U.S. air power has played a key role in facilitating the forward movement of friendly forces to Tchepone and keeping enemy forces off balance. There are increasing signs in intercepted radio traffic that some enemy units in the immediate Tchepone area are short of supplies and that re-supply efforts have been seriously disrupted by LAM SON. SIGINT reflections also indicate enemy problems in the Muong Nong area, where Binh Tram 34 has complained that it has not been supplied with enough POL to initiate its segment of the "crash" supply push to the south. The Communists seem determined to resist ARVN's incursions as forcefully as possible. Urgent efforts are in train to strengthen the defenses of the enemy's communications center at Muong Nong, about 30 miles southeast of Tchepone.

In South Vietnam, heightened enemy activity in MR 1 is largely the result of Communist efforts to interdict the Route 9 supply line to ARVN forces in Laos and to harass the LAM SON 719 rear support bases at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha. Throughout the rest of South Vietnam, fresh appeals to Communist troops to fight harder to offset ARVN activity in Laos and Cambodia have not resulted in any significant changes in the tempo or pattern of enemy activity.

In northern Laos, action around Luang Prabang has generally been light during the week. In the Sam Thong/Long Tieng/Tha Tham Bleung area, action continues to be fairly heavy as the enemy nibbles away at the defensive structure around Long Tieng. Positions on Phou Long Mat, the critical terrain feature north of Tha Tham Bleung, have exchanged hands during the week with the balance still generally in favor of friendly forces. The focus of enemy logistic activity is slipping down to the southwest edge of the Plain of Jars as he apparently girds for a major thrust at the Long Tieng base. In south Laos, activity was highlighted by a rocket attack against Pakse (the first since late April 1970) which fell short of its apparent target -- the air base. Elsewhere in the south, the friendly effort to recapture Muong Phalane is not making very much progress. Operation DESERT RAT, south of Muong Phine, continues without significant contact being reported.

The Communist attack against the oil refinery at Kompong Som marked the first major attack against a Cambodian target in five weeks. Some 60 percent of the storage capacity was destroyed or damaged, however, this is not expected to have a disrupting effect on Phnom Penh's petroleum supplies as the bulk of Phnom Penh's POL needs are supplied by convoys using the Mekong. Elsewhere in the 25X1D1a country, Communist efforts against Cambodian targets continue to be small scale and directed primarily against lines of communications NSA and FANK outpost positions. [REDACTED] the Communists are building up large forces in the countryside around Phnom Penh for attacks against the capital. No large-scale attack is expected against the capital in the immediate future, but the Communists retain the ability to conduct attacks by fire and terrorist activities against targets in or near the city.

In the TOAN THANG 01/71 operation, ARVN forces ran into increasingly strong resistance in Kompong Cham during the week. Some of the sharpest fighting took place at Dambe on Route 75 east of the Chup Rubber Plantation, where ARVN forces killed 270 Communists while losing 58 killed in a series of fierce battles. To date in this operation, over 2,000 Communists have been killed, with ARVN reporting a favorable kill ratio of about 7 to 1.

Enemy Infiltration

No detections of infiltration starts in North Vietnam were made during the week, but three South Vietnam bound and two specially designated groups were detected in south Laos and three "gap fill" groups were added, for a total of 2,630 personnel. Formal acceptance this week of all of the groups previously carried as "possibly missed" raises the infiltration estimate since 1 October 1970 to some 48,300 - 49,800. No further detections of infiltration starts in North Vietnam

are anticipated as it is now generally conceded that the "Vinh window" has been closed. If we maintain our ability to detect infiltration movements in Laos, however, we should be able to continue to provide reasonably accurate infiltration estimates. Unfortunately, advance warning of inputs into the infiltration system will be reduced by 10 to 45 days, and there is some question at this time whether enough of the groups will be detected as they traverse the Laos Panhandle to allow the highly reliable estimates of the past three years.

South Vietnam Developments

Although the decision may not yet be final, President Thieu apparently is giving serious consideration to inviting ex-Prime Minister Tran Van Huong to be his running mate in the October elections. As a Buddhist, a southerner with a political following, and a civilian, Huong would broaden the support for Thieu's ticket, but Huong's poor health might still deter him from running. Vice President Ky, according to his press secretary, has received the tentative acceptance of General Cao Van Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff, to be his running mate. Ky is having difficulty lining up support, however, and even should Vien be his running mate, Ky's prospects do not seem good. General "Big" Minh has not yet chosen his running mate, but he is beginning to organize his campaign staff and position papers. A member of Minh's staff has stated that Minh will oppose a coalition government, but will stress a political solution which will show more tolerance toward the Communists than the hard line followed by Thieu.

The government's fight against inflation is continuing to show good results. The USAID index indicates that prices in Saigon have risen only one half of one percent since last July, compared to annual price rises of about 30 percent in 1969 and early 1970. If current price levels can be maintained through the next six months, President Thieu's prospects for re-election will be considerably enhanced. Thieu has probably also helped his campaign by exempting government military and civilian salaries from the income tax.

Communist Developments

A large Chinese delegation headed by Premier Chou En-Lai visited Hanoi from 5 - 8 March. There are no hard details yet available on what Chou's party may have discussed in private sessions with the North Vietnamese leadership. At a minimum, the Chinese were making an impressive display of "fraternal solidarity."

DRV Premier Pham Van Dong's political report before the 2 - 4 March session of the National Assembly was a forceful reaffirmation of North Vietnam's determination to carry on the fight -- "increase the North's support to the South," and "better accomplish the sacred objective" of liberating South Vietnam. Like the flood of propaganda streaming out of Hanoi on the LAM SON 719 operation, Pham Van Dong also hailed the imaginary "very big defeats of important significance" dealt the Allied side in southern Laos.

~~Top Secret~~